

## NON-MEDICAL CORONERS AND PRACTISING DRUGGISTS.

*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR:—I have taken the liberty of sending you the enclosed statement, to prove to the public the necessity of having a medical gentleman for the office of Coroner.

The case to which I allude is one of recent occurrence, and took place on Monday week. I occupy the house, 24, Regent-street, Westminster, and am a chemist and druggist. From what my assistant states, a girl called on or about the 30th day of January, and told him her mother would be thankful if he would prepare a little medicine for her brother, as he was very poorly in his bowels; accordingly he did,—composed of black draught, the spir. of nit. ether, and the solution of acet. of ammonia; and on the day following she called again, and said she would feel obliged if he would prepare another quantity, saying he was better.

On Friday afternoon she said he was much worse, and complained of severe pains in the head. My assistant then told her she had better go home and tell her mother she must apply leeches to the boy's head. She then went home, and returned, saying her mother would take two, for which she paid sixpence, saying her mother had no more money. In the evening she called and said he was not so well, and only one leech had taken; my assistant told her to go home and tell her mother to try again, and encourage the bleeding of the one that had taken. The day following (Saturday) she called again, saying her mother would be thankful if he would let her have more medicine, and trust her till her father came home at night with his wages; he said he could not. She then went home and returned with the money. On Sunday I went from home, when she called and wished my assistant to come down and see her brother; he said he could not then, but would as soon as possible. She came up again about 2 o'clock, and waited for him. When he went to the house he saw the father and two women in the room, and found the boy, from their statement, had met with an accident in the early part of the week, having then inflammation of the brain; he states that he desired them to have his hair cut, or kept close back, and the head to be bathed with cold lotion; just on his saying that, a loud knock was heard, when the mother said, "I beg your pardon, another gent. has seen him;" the answer he made was, "oh, very well." From that time to the day of his death, the Thursday following, he never saw him, neither did he prior to the Sunday, but heard that a medical man in the neighbourhood continued to attend him.

No. 811.

On the inquest, the father swore positively that I attended the child four days. I now, and have before declared, that I neither knew anything of the boy nor the transaction; they never sent for my assistant, or made any inquiry into what treatment the child had, though a medical man had been attending the child part of the week. A post-mortem examination has taken place; there was no medical evidence given or had, but a verdict of accidental death was brought in. This proves at once, to every person with common sense, the inefficiency of the Coroner and jury. I have sent this, which can be made use of in any way you think proper. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

W. WOOLLEY.

24, Regent-street, Westminster,  
Feb. 13, 1839.

## POISONING WITH MONKSHOOD.

*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR:—If you are of opinion that the following case is of sufficient interest to merit a place in your pages, I shall feel much obliged by its insertion. I remain, Sir, your humble servant,

RICHARD DIX, House-Apothecary.  
Derby Infirmary, March 1, 1839.

About half-past seven o'clock on Monday evening, 25th ult., a poor woman, of the name of M'Kinder, brought her little boy, aged 13 months, to the infirmary, and producing a portion of a fresh root which it had just vomited, and which, on examination, proved to be that of the *aconitum napellus*, or monkshood, said, that about an hour ago the child, after being put to bed, appeared to be in great pain, and began to vomit. On inquiry she learned that some of her elder children, who had been playing in her neighbour's garden, had taken thence some of this root and had given it to the child; she thinks this happened about five o'clock. The symptoms were vomiting, slow and intermitting pulse, dilated pupils, with great tendency to stupor, and apparent suffering of much pain.

The following treatment was adopted:—A teaspoonful of ipecacuanha wine was given every fifteen minutes, until the stomach was completely evacuated; after which brandy, compound spirits of ammonia, and strong coffee were administered at intervals, which, together with mustard plasters to the pit of the stomach, and the calves of the legs, the affusion of cold water from a height upon the occiput, and a turpentine enema, in the course of four hours, relieved the little patient from its dangerous symptoms. It afterwards took nutriment from the breast, fell

3 N